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pression of their own nature; while later authors might be copyists in style? This is to be expected. People follow the law of ease of utterance. In early times men would be disposed to follow their instincts. Later writers had greater access to the works of other men; and this must have had its effect.

PRESIDENT SHEPHERD: I think Prof. Garner is right. I have brought this out before. Many passages of Jeremy Taylor, Milton, Browne and such men show the breaking out of the individuality of the writer. Later writers show uniformity and monotony. Macaulay might be said to be beautifully so.

The next communication on the list was by Professor H. C. O. HUSS (Princeton College):

3. "Victor Hugo's Religion as drawn from his Writings," of which the following is an abstract:

#### I.

When the archbishop of Paris, at the news that V. Hugo's last hour was approaching, called in person at his residence offering to administer to him spiritual aid and the rites of the Catholic church, the poet's kinsman, Mr. Lockroy, is reported to have refused the offer with the words:—"Victor Hugo is expecting death, but he does not desire the services of a priest." The local clerical papers at once declared that Mr. Lockroy had acted arbitrarily in the matter, and yet there is nothing more certain than that the answer given to the bishop was exactly in keeping with Hugo's spirit and convictions as repeatedly and consistently expressed by him throughout his lifetime. For Hugo's religion was not the Catholic religion. Nor was the feeling that he entertained in regard to the Catholic church mere indifference but rather hatred and contempt. The same "Muse of Indignation" which inspires his "Chastisements" against the emperor, dictated his pungent satire, 'The Pope.' The pope, we read in the 'Legend of the Ages,' deceives mankind. "O horror! Satan and he put on the same ring. Jerusalem! they cause thy lamb to be devoured by the old wolf of Rome."

The Eternal City seems to him a rendezvous of all the vilest passions, crimes and vices, of infamy, fraud, perjury and carnal lust, "a prostitute with the tiara on her brow."

"Rome," he declares, "a charnel-house under the eagle, became a bazar under the cross."

Of the officials of the church he says:

"Priests are open abysses; he who looks into them sees horrible things."

"The priest hates and lies."

"Priests make shadow."

"God made the world, a book in which the priest reads poorly."

"The priest is a reptile to the tyrant." And, addressing the priests:

"You love useful darkness, and you are prowling therein vile and victorious, oh reptiles!"

A special object of his contempt was the convent. Monachism is styled by him "a leprosy which has almost eaten into the bones of two admirable nations, Italy and Spain."

"He who says convent, says slough." His estimate of the Spanish convent, than which nothing in his writings has caused greater scandal nor aroused fiercer animosity amongst the Catholic clergy, is known to all the readers of 'Les Misérables,' and of 'Torquemada.'

The Catholic doctrine found no more favor in Hugo's eyes than its priesthood. "The old dreary dogmas are repugnant to me," he sighs. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception aroused his indignation, because he saw in the coronation of one woman an insult to all the rest; while that of the Infallibility of the Pope was an object of his derision.

If he rejected dogma *per se* it was because in his opinion it dwarfs the infinite and eternal by reducing it to finite human proportions, giving but "fragments of the indivisible, shadows of the light, masks of the infinite taken from humanity." A sky that is supported by a mountain, whether it be Olympus or Sinai, is too narrow for him, whom the contemplation of the universe alone satisfies.

The question whether Hugo's religion was the Christian religion, if it was not the Catholic, must also be answered negatively. It is true that he had the profoundest reverence for the person and the teachings of Christ, true also that he called the Bible his book and insisted on preaching the gospel in the villages, and on enriching every cottage with a Bible; but it is just as certain that he saw in Christ no more than an enlightened reformer and an exalted type of human virtue. The fact that he mentions him side by side not only with Socrates but with Voltaire is eloquent enough, while the irony with which he treats the dogmas of original sin and atonement would not leave the slightest doubt with reference to his belief, even if he did not say expressly that his God has no son.

## II.

The existence of God was not only never denied but was at all times loudly and emphatically affirmed by Hugo, so that only the grossest ignorance calls him atheist. The following quotations are certainly not ambiguous:

"He is, however, this God."

"We believe in this living God."

"Oh! let us bless God in our profound faith! It is He who made your soul and created the world! It is He whom I find at the bottom of every mystery."

"(The conscience of man is the thought of God.)"

"He is my only hope and my only fear."

"Be satisfied with believing in Him; be satisfied with hope and its great wing, faith."

"He is, since it is He whom I feel in the words, Ideal, Absolute, Duty, Reason, Knowledge."

"Believe, and your eyelids will open!"

"Woe to him who believes nothing!"

Since these and similar utterances are met with in all his works, it is evident that atheism has at no period of his life had any hold upon him.

To answer the question what Hugo's idea of God was we have to discriminate between the expressions of his youth and manhood on one side and of his old age on the other.

In the former periods of his life he worships a God whose essence and attributes are to a certain extent those of the Bible, a personal God who as Providence takes a paternal care of all His creatures and is constantly at work in the interest of human progress, whose leader He is. Notice the following:

"This Father dwells in the realm of eternity. He thinks, orders, rules, weighs, judges, loves."

"The divine finger (which) leads generations from progress to progress."

"But we struggle, and we shall conquer, God leads us."

Did Hugo pray to this God? Most decidedly. He affirms that he believes in the sublimity of prayer. The 'Contemplations,' moreover contain a prayer beginning: "I come unto thee, Lord, a father in whom we must believe"—a prayer written by Hugo the poet, and conceived by Hugo the man when mourning the loss of his beloved daughter—a most touching prayer, in which one can almost hear the throbs of a broken heart and see eyes full of tears and full of faith.

Again the "prayer for all" which he puts into the mouth of his grand-child is full of true religious sentiment.

In one most essential point, however, Hugo's God totally differs from that of the Bible. While no sparrow falls from the roof without the will of the latter, many important events happen without, and even contrary to, the will of the former. Hugo is not willing to admit that public calamities, as inundations for instance, in which the innocent perish together with the guilty, are the works of God: nor that such scourges of mankind as Nimrod, Cyrus, Cambyses, and Attila are sent by Providence. Of the wild slaughter and blood-shed during the war of the Commune in Paris he says: "If some priest says that God willed it, he lies."

Concerning the Bourbons we are told that they were an instrument of civilization which broke in the hands of Providence; while Napoleon I. is represented as a troublesome obstacle to Providence:

"He was in the way of God" (*il gênait Dieu*).

"Jacob only wrestled with an angel, Napoleon wrestled with Jehovah."

The force acting independently of, and oftentimes contrary to God,

is according to Hugo no other than destiny. The dualism of Providence and destiny, of the constructive and the destructive agency, of the good and evil principle—this dualism is one of Hugo's fundamental beliefs and one of the main-springs and leading ideas in his most noteworthy productions. Without the idea of *ἀναγκή* we should have no 'Notre Dame de Paris,' no 'Misérables,' no 'Travailleurs de la Mer,' no 'L'Homme qui rit,' no 'Légende des Siècles.' The gigantic wall in the poet's vision from which the 'Legend of the Ages' sprang is overthrown by two winged genii, the one calling: God and the other: Fatality.

Destiny in its struggle with Providence frequently gets the better of it. What must surprise us most, however, is the fact that he prayed to a Providence which if not exactly a "servant of Ananke," as he calls that of the Indians and Manichæans, was at least pushed occasionally against the wall by destiny. It almost seems, to judge from the inconsistent use he makes of the term destiny, that he had not within himself a clear idea of it. On the occasion of his return from his exile to France Hugo utters the following startling words: "Who can guess at this moment when God perhaps fails, whether it is towards the gloomy or bright side that the wheel will turn? What will come from thy hand which veils itself, oh Destiny?"

All that seems to him irrational comes from this perverse and blundering agency. In regard to the reverses of France in 1870-71 he exclaims: "Ah! what destiny has done to us is infamous." But—and this is his consolation—the triumph of destiny is transient, the final victory belongs to Providence, "God," he says, "has always corrected the blunders of destiny," here we have the idea underlying *La Fin de Satan*.

"*Hoc erat in fatis.*" At the same time the poet sees the shadow of an enormous right hand projected on Waterloo, and says that God has passed.

### III.

In his old age Hugo abandoned his theistic views of the Divinity. His God ceases to be circumscribed and personal and expands into the Infinite. He defines him as "the conscious infinite" and conceives of him as the essence of the ideal, as an inaccessible and invisible source of never-fading light penetrating everything so that the bird has it in its nest and the tree in its stem. This pantheistic view finds its clearest expression in the following passage:

"All is but One . . . he (God) is in a beehive as well as in Rome; the worm is not farther from the infinite than man."

This God reveals himself within us in our conscience, and without us in nature, when "he speaks through the voice of the elements without priests and without bibles."

"The true book opens in the depths of a thundering sky."

It is impossible not to be reminded here of A. von Humboldt's two

great objects of veneration "our conscience within us, and the starry sky above us."

Hugo at all times had the keenest sense of the beauty and grandeur of nature, and this appreciation was rooted as deeply in his religious convictions as in his æsthetic needs. He is attracted by the forest because "a God inhabits it," or because he feels "some great one that hears and loves him;" and he is impressed and overcome by an extensive view because he feels "in all its immensity the smallness of man and the greatness of God."

The pantheistic views of his old age deepened this love of nature into veneration. Nature now becomes his place of worship. He tells us that he doubts in a temple, but believes on a mountain; that the azure is his church; the rosy lily, his Levite; the evening star, his taper; the moon, the holy wafer; the sun, the eucharist; that religion is a sky contemplated and that he prays with the mountains.

#### IV.

Did Hugo find joy and peace in his belief? is a question which naturally presents itself to the mind and which is to be answered in the affirmative. In a walk on the island of his exile, where the beauty of mountains and sea and the brightness of the sky impress him, he exclaims:

"What matters to me the number of my fleety days! I touch the infinite, I see eternity. Storms! passions! be silent in my soul! Never did my heart penetrate so near to God . . . Blessed be those that hate me, and blessed those that love me! . . . I will do nothing but love, for I have so little time."

And in another walk along the shore, where everything is to him serenity, majesty, force and grace, he says:

"Here everything cradles, reassures and caresses. No more shadows in my heart; no more bitter cares. An ineffable peace unceasingly rises and descends from the deep azure of my soul to the deep azure of the sea."

But the greatest strength and best comfort that he drew from his religion was his firmness of belief in the immortality of the soul. To the worm of the earth who boasts of getting everything he replies: "You have not all, monster, you do not get the soul." He calls the soul the slave of life and the queen of eternity; and affirms that "as the cradle has a yesterday, so the tomb has a to-morrow."

"This world is but the vestibule of another."

Accordingly, death has no sting for him; may he speak of it with ecstasy:

"O death! glorious hour! mortuary radiance! God at this inexpressible hour disperses the body into the universe, and the soul into love."

"Death is the entrance to the great light."

"Do not say to die; to be born over."

To die is not to end; it is the supreme morning.

Nor has the tomb any terror for him. On the contrary, he is en-

thusiastic in the praise of its sublimity. There is to him no place more elevated, no place fuller of light and of life, nor wider in compass than that which the majority of people call the narrow, gloomy, silent grave :—

“To arrive at the tomb is to reach the summit.”

“The tomb is a nest in which the soul takes wings like a bird.”

“His (man’s) dawn is in the tomb.”

The most complete expression of his views on the tomb and what comes after it, is found in the poem that he wrote on the occasion of the interment of his son :

“The tomb is a sublime prolongation. One ascends to it astonished to have believed that he had to descend . . . . It is not in order to sleep that we die ; no, it is to do better what we have been doing here below. It is to do it well. We have only the end, heaven has the means . . . . On earth we are limited, on earth we are in exile, but on high we grow without crowding the infinite. . . . Go then, my son ! go, spirit ! become a torch ! Radiate. Enter soaring into thy immense tomb.”

It is evident from what has been said that Hugo had a religion of his own. He emphatically asserts that his God was neither pagan nor Christian, and that his creed was none of the creeds of the present or past. While he deeply felt the need of religion and loudly professed it, he rejected all positive religions for the reason that, in his opinion, they do no justice to the majesty of the living God, who appears in them as “an immense, and yet puny counterfeit of man.”

Professor ADOLPHE COHN, (Harvard University) opened the discussion on this paper :

I was very much interested and pleased when I saw for the first time the title of the paper that has just been read. The question of Victor Hugo’s religion is a much wider one than may appear at first sight ; and when well understood it gives a key to the religious, moral and political situation of France to-day. Hugo’s religion was personal, but in another sense it was the religion of the most active men of the French people, and of French thinkers. The refusal of attendance on the part of the Catholic priests is not unique. Hugo is not the only one who shows the position of the great men of the present. Louis Blanc, the friend of the people, and also the great orator, Gambetta, traveled from the death-bed unattended by any ministrations of the Catholic church. Were they believers in God ? Gambetta was probably an atheist, judged by the ordinary doctrines. But is religion to be only something which binds us and imposes conformity ? Hugo’s Pantheism was reached

pretty early. It runs from the earliest works to the latest efforts of his life. The key to it is his sympathy for human suffering. The beauty and the duty of destroying all pain is the one great thought which purifies all Hugo's thought and that of the liberal men of France.

Professor ALCÉE FORTIER (Tulane University): I must differ with Prof. Huss. If we read Hugo's works carefully and continuously, I think we may see that he shows no enmity against the Catholic church and Christianity. I might show how he was not in favor of the Inquisition. No man is in favor of the Inquisition. In *Les Misérables* we find that admirable picture of an Archbishop witnessing Hugo's want of hatred for the clergy. Surely if he did not practise the Catholic religion he was at least a Christian man and so acted. Or if he did not practice a particular orthodox belief, he tried to find out everything about religion.

Professor HUSS: I have not said he did not practise religious principles; but he did not profess the Christian religion. Buddha too teaches us to love our neighbor. If we are to decide on Hugo's christianity, we must look not only at religious principles but also at the profession and practice of religion. Hugo says emphatically that his God has no son. *Torquemada* has passages showing his attitude very clearly. And the Spanish priests had many substantial reasons for burning *Les Misérables*.

Professor COHN: Might we not reconcile Profs. Huss and Fortier by suggesting that the word "hatred" is too strong a term? Against religion itself, Hugo had no words of hatred; but only for those who created misery in the world. Wherever he could he made beautiful types of noble manhood. Privately, he thought of his mission as one for the helping of mankind. His only religion was sympathy for human suffering. In a codicil to his will, he says: "I believe in God; and I give 50,000 francs to the poor."

Professor HUSS: I have not said that Hugo hated the Catholic religion; but the church and the priests. Truly he did hate the pope and the priests.

Professor CH. F. KROEH (Stevens' Institute): I am inclined to separate the man from the poet. Hugo's admiration for the christian religion may have been on a poetical side.

Professor GARNER (Indiana University): We frequently



fail to take in the special meaning of words long after the activity which caused the thought and the words has ceased. If we ask a man if he believes in God and Christianity, we get his answer Yes or No more or less qualified. If he believe in God, we find he believes in a God no one else believes in. This is very little to discover; but after all we are very seldom much more certain than this. Even if we associate with some men from day to day, we are not able to find out what they really believe.

The Convention here adjourned till 3 p. m. and about a hundred of its members met at the St. James Hotel to partake of the luncheon which had been noted on the program. This luncheon was prolonged considerably over the hour of meeting and about 3.30 p. m. the session was called to order by the President, when Professor O. B. SUPER (Dickinson College) opened the reading with a paper on

4. "Some Disputed Points in the Pronunciation of German."\*

Professor CH. F. KROEH (Stevens' Institute) began the discussion by saying:

An investigation of this kind has two objects: in the first place, as directly helpful in class-room work; and secondly for the purpose of phonetic research. In regard to the class-room, it seems to me the opinion of an educated native would be enough. The differences are not so very great. A native German's usefulness as a teacher need not be denied for the reason that we can tell by his pronunciation just what part of the country he comes from. In the second place, it is an important thing for the teacher to make up his mind which is the pronunciation to teach. I agree with the general drift of the speaker's remarks. But I should add that I don't think any one part of Germany is entitled to a monopoly; there is no section which could establish a German Academy. Yet take the Germans from different sections and hear them talk; we find the points on which they differ are very small. The questions in this paper only amount to four or five. If we have adopted any one of the different pronunciations, we may explain the variations to our pupils, for the sake of understanding the language wherever they may go in Germany. And a

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\*Cf. "Transactions" pp. 74-82. for full paper.